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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 JEDDAH 000396

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SUBJECT: SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER ON: AMCIT DEPENDENT, FUTURE MEETINGS, IRAN, DESIGNATION OF TERRORISM FINANCIERS, IRF REPORT, SAUDI CHARITIES, DIPLOMATIC CONTAINERS, VISA RECIPROCITY, THE PEACE PROCESS, AND IRAQ.

REF: REF: RIYADH 1903

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana C. Gfoeller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d) and 1.5 (b), (d) and (g).

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY. During a September 12 discussion with Ambassador Ford Fraker and Jeddah Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal summarized the SAG position on a variety of issues. The Prince stated the importance of working in partnership with the U.S. to address common concerns about Iran. He stressed the need for proof from the USG for the Saudi government to take actions against five individuals to be designated to the UN as terrorism financiers. Prince Faisal informed the Ambassador that the SAG welcomes members of the International Religious Freedom office and Commission to return to Saudi. He assured the Ambassador that the SAG would soon decide on the composition of the Charities Commission, adding that while the solution should prevent the disbursement of funds to finance terrorism, the SAG believes receiving countries should be accountable for the flow of funds as well. The Prince explained that diplomatic containers are being held due to issues with the Ministry of Finance, but that he would make an effort to resolve problems. He was optimistic about Saudi efforts to work towards visa reciprocity. Prince Faisal stated that Saudi Arabia will participate in the upcoming peace process meetings if topics it deems critical for discussion are added to the agenda. He said that Saudi Arabia's goals in Iraq are the same as the USG's: stability and the well-being of its people. END SUMMARY.

AMCIT DEPENDENT

12. (C) Opening a meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal at the Jeddah Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 12, Ambassador Ford Fraker thanked the Prince for his assistance with an AmCit case involving a dependent. The Prince responded that the USG and SAG share the view that such cases represent humanitarian issues and that action to address these cases should be in the best interest of the dependent. He also stated his understanding that there are relatively few such incidents affecting U.S./Saudi relations

compared with U.S. relations with other countries.

MEETINGS

13. (C) Jeddah Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller confirmed that Prince Faisal is available and willing to meet the Secretary on September 21, 22 or 23 in New York and to meet A/S Welch at UNGA on September 23 between 10AM and 2PM.

14. (C) The Iraq Neighbors Group meeting was not scheduled during October because Saudi Arabia could not attend during the suggested dates. The Ambassador asked Prince Faisal if Saudi Arabia will be able to attend a meeting of the group in November in Istanbul, and requested specific dates.

IRAN

15. (S) The Ambassador stated that he wanted to ensure that Saudi Arabia had the U.S. position on the proposed IAEA Action Plan for Iran (on which he handed over a non-paper), as the U.S. and Saudi Arabia share some of the same concerns. Prince Faisal agreed that there are factors of concern to everyone. He stated that the Iranians have troubles of their own, noting that Rafsanjani, at the center of Iranian politics, is one to watch. In agreement with the Ambassador that the problems in Iran are very real, he predicted that "something will have to give" in response to building pressure. He stated that it is good for like minded countries to work together on real issues, rather than operating based on assumptions.

DESIGNATION OF TERRORISM FINANCIERS

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16. (S/NF) Presenting Prince Faisal with a non-paper from the USG proposing the UN designation of five terror financiers, the Ambassador formally provided the names of the individuals. The Prince expressed his belief that the actions of individual countries are more significant than whether the UN places names on a list. He stressed that the designation of the five individuals is a very controversial religious issue among Saudi Arabians, as one of the five pillars of Islam is zakat (charitable giving); without proof that the named individuals committed acts leading to their designation, the government will be unable to take actions against them and the Saudi courts will not uphold the designations. The Prince affirmed that he had seen all five names previously.

IRF REPORT

17. (C) The Ambassador reminded Prince Faisal that the International Religious Freedom Report will be issued and made public September 13, available online September 15, and available in Arabic translation one week later. The Prince explained that the last time representatives from the International Religious Freedom office and Commission were in Saudi Arabia they were unable to meet with everyone and see everything they wanted to, and in response the Saudi government extended an invitation to them to return to meet with additional people and visit more locations.

SAUDI CHARITIES

18. (S) The government of Saudi Arabia is considering either central government control or a regulatory approach as options for oversight of charities. In response to the Ambassador's question about a timeline for a decision, Prince Faisal stated that the government needs to further discuss which option is more fitting for Saudi Arabia. He said that in general the government prefers a central approach, but acknowledged that a regulatory approach may be better. The final solution would need to serve the purpose of ensuring that no illegal funds are routed through charity organizations. However, he also noted that it is the view of

the Saudi government that it should be the responsibility of any receiving country to take measures to prevent the flow of funds intended for use in terrorist activities, and assured the Ambassador that Saudi Arabia will support such measures. He told the Ambassador that the government would soon reach a decision regarding a mechanism for oversight of charity organizations.

DIPLOMATIC CONTAINERS

¶9. (C) Prince Faisal explained that problems associated with the holding of diplomatic containers arise from a continuing confrontation with the Minister of Finance, who oversees customs. He promised that if the Ambassador provided specific information regarding one particular diplomatic container that is not being released, he would address the issue. The Ambassador stated that the holding of diplomatic containers is especially concerning due to issues of reciprocity between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. The Prince responded that the SAG is attempting to streamline the process whereby customs officials examine containers. He jokingly accused the U.S. of causing the delays by providing the technology to view the contents of containers.

VISA RECIPROCITY

¶10. (C) On September 11 the Saudi Cabinet of Ministers authorized Prince Saud al Faisal to hold talks with the USG to negotiate a reciprocal increase in non-immigrant visa validity to five years (reftel). The Ambassador assured Prince Faisal that he is working hard to advance the issue. Prince Faisal stated that he believes there are two sides to the issue of preventing terrorists from entering the U.S.: visas and airport control. He also believes that this issue

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can be addressed simply and without humiliation to passengers. He said that Saudi students want to go to the U.S. to study, but once they arrive they often face many problems and opt to transfer to schools outside of the U.S.; therefore, the main issue is not the number of students that go to the U.S. on visas, but the number that remain.

¶11. (C) Regarding policy, he expressed his belief that the "devil often lies in the details"; he does not view the general laws that policy makers want to create to protect the U.S. as problems, but rather sees the details within the laws as problematic to Saudis who wish to travel to the U.S. He stressed the importance of having someone monitor the inclusion of these details within more general laws. He stated that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have common interests, and that issues can be resolved to reinforce security. He does not think that existing U.S. regulations prevent terrorists from entering the country, but in fact believes that they provide a blueprint for terrorists to figure out how, or how not, to enter. He volunteered that the Saudi government can take steps within its own borders to vet individuals before they apply for or receive visas. The Ambassador again stressed to the Prince that he is making a concerted effort to raise awareness about the issue of visa reciprocity among policy makers in Washington, D.C.

THE PEACE PROCESS

¶12. (S) Prince Faisal described how he is constantly questioned about what would need to happen for Saudi Arabia to participate in the upcoming meeting on the peace process. He explained that Saudi Arabia has said many times that if critical substantive issues are not addressed at the meeting there is no justification for attending. He said, for example, that it makes no sense for Syria to negotiate issues regarding Iraq, but not negotiate issues pertaining to Syria (i.e., the Golan Heights). He argued that if the goal is to find a solution, why create a situation in which a solution cannot be reached? He stated that all help possible is needed to move forward on the Peace Process. However, it is

necessary in his view to discuss borders, Jerusalem and other contentious issues in order to move forward, and without a discussion of these issues he believes it would be a waste of time to meet.

¶13. (S) Prince Faisal stated that he met with Abu Mazen to discuss unifying the position of the Palestinians. He stressed the centrality of the Arab Peace Process and that the Palestinians must come together to reach a resolution about where they stand on it, or else there will be no progress. However, he also expressed his belief that division among Palestinians can be beneficial because it can segregate the extremists.

IRAQ

¶14. (S) Prince Faisal stated that Saudi Arabia shares the disappointment of the U.S. in the limited political successes in Iraq. He believes that the only way out of the current situation in Iraq is for the Shi'a to take responsibility for drawing the Sunni population into reconciliation for the good of the Iraqi people. It is his opinion that the USG should urge the Shi'a to do this as a form of payback for having been brought to power.

GFOELLER